



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	DAYTON, TN	Accident Number:	ATL90FA074
Date & Time:	03/08/1990, 0948 EST	Registration:	N7123Y
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-30	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT HAD REPORTED LEVEL AT 11,000 FT. A SHORT TIME LATER, WHEN ATC REQUESTED HIS HEADING, HE RESPONDED THAT HE HAD AN AUTOPILOT MALFUNCTION. ATC ASKED THE PILOT IF HE WANTED VECTORS. THE PILOT RESPONDED 'PLEASE.' THERE WERE NO FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE AIRCRAFT. THE AIRCRAFT IMPACTED INTO A RIVER IN A STEEP ANGLE ALMOST DIRECTLY BELOW HIS LAST REPORTED POSITION. THE PILOT WAS IN IMC CONDITIONS, WHILE EN ROUTE TO HAVE AUTOPILOT MAINTENANCE. HE WAS KNOWN TO RELY ON HIS AUTOPILOT DURING IFR FLIGHT.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S INTENTIONAL USE OF AN AUTOPILOT WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES. THE PILOT KNOWINGLY RELIED ON THIS AUTOPILOT WHICH MALFUNCTIONED IN FLIGHT AND RESULTED IN HIS BECOMING SPATIALLY DISORIENTATED.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) AUTOPILOT/FLIGHT DIRECTOR - FAILURE,PARTIAL
 2. (C) OPERATION WITH KNOWN DEFICIENCIES IN EQUIPMENT - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	70, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	05/02/1988
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	6313 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1770 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N7123Y
Model/Series:	PA-30 PA-30	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	30-142
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	11/01/1989, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	IO-320-B
Registered Owner:	WILMA PETE	Rated Power:	160 hp
Operator:	LOWELL B. PETE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CSV, 1881 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	27 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0952 EST	Direction from Accident Site:	320°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 400 ft agl	Visibility	2 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 600 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6° C / 5° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	CROSSVILLE, TN (CSV)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	LEESBURG, FL (LEE)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	0928 EST	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JAMES D TONELLI	Report Date:	09/04/1992
Additional Participating Persons:	LYNN LAFEVER; NASHVILLE, TN ROBERT BOOB, JR.; VERO BEACH, FL		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).